

701 shoot an arrow into anybody's pot of meat, taking whatever piece stuck to
158 the shaft.

Parents warned boys who were constantly recalcitrant that they would become such. Most Crazy Dogs started out as wayward youths.

Such men carried on as Dogs until after the performance of some conspicuous act of bravery. After many years of Crazy Dog activity, their rattles were taken from them by a respectable middle-aged man (ténapa).

[555] "They had attained prestige and could leave off their antics." By their war records ex-Crazy Dogs were always men of importance in the tribe.

624 It is clear from these facts that the war bonnet and other special in-
554 signia served a definite social function in Comanche society; they marked the status of the war chief as distinct from that of the lesser war leader, and the special devotees of the war cult from the common warrior.

OBLIGATIONS OF THE WAR BONNET WEARER

554 The Comanche owner of a war bonnet was under obligation never to
726 retreat. This was the primary duty assumed with the status. The bonnet was a symbol of tribal integrity and honor to the Comanche, to be protected at all costs. The mere fact that the wearer could not retreat made him a rallying point for all other fighters when he was hard-pressed, for it was equally disgraceful for the bonnet to fall into the hands of the enemy should the wearer be wounded or killed. The war bonnet wearer, dismounted and hard-pressed, could indeed be rescued by a fellow tribesman who dared to risk dashing in to carry the brave off on his horse. This was the sole escape with honor. In one fierce three-day battle with the Utes, a Comanche war chief was so wounded in the leg that he was having difficulty. Another tékniwap mounted behind him and held him in his place on the horse while he fought off the enemy. The Utes forced the Comanches back and ever back over a battle-field sixty-five miles long. When, during the action, the wounded war chief died, he was tied to the saddle by his protector to avoid his being captured with his bonnet. During the entire fight his body and its protector were screened by a group of fighting braves.

• 558 On the other hand, it was the absolute duty of a tékniwap to help a dismounted comrade. Should he fail to do so, any other war chief who observed his disloyalty could publicly upbraid him with the act and take the war bonnet from him in punishment. The accuser was then free to offer it to some other warrior whom he thought deserved it.¹⁴ But this man was also free to refuse if he feared the obligations attached to it. This was said

¹⁴ Compare also the case cited on page 55, where a claimant to a piece of land (on the reservation) had the judgment go against him because he had one time failed to rescue a comrade.

to be the way it was done, though no case describing such a situation was collected. 558 ●

A war chief whose nerve failed him in a dangerous position *could* retreat—by giving up his right to wear the bonnet. He could cast it off and flee for his life. But he was a man without status thenceforth, for he could never again regain the bonnet and its rank. Life certainly would have been miserable from that point onward. Men hailed him as "elder sister."¹⁵

But what a chance this disaster opened for an ambitious brave to gain the war leader's status in one stride! He could dash into the danger spot to pick up the abandoned hat with his spear or bow. Turning his horse, he would bring it back and put it on a pole behind his lines. If the fight still continued when the sun was about to set, he then went to the pole and put on the hat. Thus arrayed he charged the enemy four times and struck an adversary on each foray. If he was successful in this and came through alive, the hat was his with all the privileges, honors, obligations and dangerous duties which went with it. This was the practice in the Those Who Move Often and Antelope bands. The lower rank war bonnet could be picked up by any one who saw it and was willing to assume the obligations adhering thereto. For it, the use of the bow or spear was not necessary, according to *Becomes A Middle-Aged Man*.¹⁶ 555 726

PEACEMAKING

The waging of war was a matter of individual initiative, but the making of peace was a prerogative only in the hands of the war chiefs. A war leader on a raid could make peace in behalf of his own raiding party on his own authority. Such a peace, however, had no binding effect upon other members of the band and not at all upon the tribe. Band peace was made only upon unanimous consent of the warrior class, i.e., the meeting of the *tékniwapna*. The historical making of peace with the Kiowas has been noted on page 12. All Comanche bands agreed to this with the result that it has remained unbroken since 1790. A permanent peace with the Cheyenne was effected in 1840.¹⁷ 728 624

Relations with other tribes were more in the nature of truces than peace,

¹⁵ According to a generalized observation by Neighbors (*The Comanches*, p. 130): "He is deprived of his office by any misfortune, such as loss of many men in battle, or even a single defeat, or being taken prisoner, but never for any private act unconnected with the welfare of the whole tribe." It is not so much that he was deprived of his office, as that he no longer could gain a following.

¹⁶ The above rules are formulated principles for which no histories in action were obtainable.

¹⁷ The Comanche version of the details of this occasion is lost. Its setting in the Cheyenne picture will be included in the author's forthcoming study of Cheyenne Law-ways.

x627 The principle of "soak the rich" was also a practice of Comanche law.
 556 Damages were scaled partly in accordance with the wealth of the offender. There was no feeling that a rich man *ought* to pay more. It was just that he could, and the Comanche prosecutor stuck the defendant for whatever he could squeeze.

x627 Damages usually sought were horses. Blankets, guns, saddles, clothing,
 231 robes or any other article of personal property *except medicine powers and related paraphernalia* were frequently asked for in addition. The horse, however, remained the basic consideration. For adultery or wife-absconding, from one to ten horses were transferred, seldom more. Special pains were often taken to specify the horse or horses demanded by the aggrieved, and quite frequently the demand was for what both punished and humiliated: the favorite horse of the defendant. No matter how many horses the defendant might offer which were just as good, a prosecutor would be adamant in his demand that the favorite be delivered over to him. Such horses were favored by the owner for qualities of grace, speed and stamina, or just as often because the animal had been the gift of a beloved friend. Old men today in reminiscent thought will say that in the old days a warrior oftentimes loved his horse more than his wife, or child, or any other human being. It is in the light of this that the demand for a favorite horse indicates that such damages—indeed, any damages—are more than mere economic compensation. As the wronged man suffered a spiritual hurt, so must the guilty party suffer a spiritual loss. Thus, damages collected were in part damage done to [558] the wrong-doer's "face."

x627 The *beau geste* which crops up in so many cases is simply another
 231 indication of this point. The magnificent and haughty slaying of horses
 554 given, or due, in damages was no act of economic nature. This fine disdain indicates a psychological satisfaction more precious than the mere reception of wealth in payment of a wrong.

x627 Doubly, therefore, was bargaining tense, with pride and punishment
 684 playing upon the economic factors. The jockeying and sparring of the bargain, with some of the imponderabilia of impinging attitudes are strikingly revealed in the following typical case.

Case 9. *Levirate Claim: Mexican vs. Breaks Something*
 Informant: *Breaks Something*

"Mexican was a friend of Touched With A Closed Fist. They called each other brother. When Touched With A Closed Fist died a long time ago, Mexican went to claim the widow for his wife. That was Woman. Woman didn't want to live with him, so she came to me.

"We were living down at Red Store when one day two men came to see me.

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595 Comparison at this point with a reference to Comanche law from the literature will indicate how much more deeply the stream runs than appears from the surface, and why special study with reference to legal behavior is fruitful. "Polygamy is practised to a great extent—some chiefs having more than ten wives, but inconstancy is the natural result of it, which is frequently punished by cutting off the nose of the transgressor, and sometimes even death; but more frequently the woman escapes unpunished and the seducer is deprived of all his available property, which is yielded to the injured party, by custom, without resistance."¹⁰

In those unfortunate cases in which the defendant was so poverty-stricken as to be unable to pay any damages whatsoever, his opponent had legal recourse to thrashing him on the bare back with a horse whip.

Case 10. *Adultery: Buffalo Robe vs. Cliff*

Informant: *That's It*

Buffalo Robe found Cliff lying with his wife. Since the husband knew that Cliff was too poor to pay him any damages. He took his quirt and started to whip the fellow. The culprit had to stand still and say nothing until Buffalo Robe was finished. Then he went home, his back raw and bleeding.

In later years Cliff used to boast about how he had lain with Buffalo Robe's wife and what a beating he took for it.

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558 It is not that Cliff had become case-hardened: it is the satisfaction an old man derives from re-living and re-telling the pranks of his youth, as did the old men in the Smoke Lodge. As a youth, however, Cliff was horribly disgraced by the whipping. He had been physically and socially debased before the entire tribe. Only great war honors could have reestablished a position for him.

x627 Case 11. *Adultery: Whipping waived by Warrior*

684 Informant: *Post Oak Jim*

"A bunch of Comanches were out raiding one time when some American soldiers caught them off guard. The soldiers got away with most of our horses. My nephew saved just one white horse from the soldiers. It was the only horse left in his band.

"Just after that bad luck, he got caught in adultery with another man's wife. He spoke right up and told the husband he would settle for it, for he admitted he was in the wrong and was willing to make it good. He offered his white horse to the husband—it was the only horse left. The husband was willing to settle it at that, since there were no more horses available. That was a lively horse and very skittish. Catching it was always hard work. This time, all the friends and my relatives joined in chasing the horse to bridle it. One of them finally captured it, but it fell

¹⁰ Neighbors, *The Comanches* (Schoolcraft, *Indians*, vol. 2), pp. 131-132.

start back with them, but she cried pitifully to have to leave her young lover. After they had started, she lagged behind sullenly.

"They had gone. The young absconder broke camp. He mounted and rode on past them. As his horses ran by, Red Crooked Nose killed one of them and called upon his party to take the meat he had shot for them. Then the owner of the dead horse scorned him, 'My feelings aren't hurt. I can get plenty of horses—like the grass, so many!' And he rode on."

"He knew that Red Crooked Nose would not have dared to kill his horse without the warrior as protector.

"While stopping one night they heard that enemies were coming. The women were sent on. The men prepared for war. Before the battle started, the young man donned his best war paraphernalia. With his feathers flying he rode past the camp of Red Crooked Nose. He fought conspicuously and was killed.

"The champion saw him go down.

"He called to Red Crooked Nose, saying, 'It was we who caused him to be killed. I know you are a coward, but you have to go and walk in front of the enemy to protect us while I carry off his body.'

"Thus they took the young man off the field, and put his body on a horse. When the woman saw his body brought back, she tore her dress apart, slashed her body all over with her knife, and cut her hair off short. She embraced his body and wanted to throw her jewelry away in mourning. But the people pulled her away, telling her to keep it in remembrance of him.

"Red Crooked Nose and his champion rode up and mourned him. Then he was wrapped in blankets and buried. The camp broke up and continued on its way."

Though it is the activities of the intermediary which we must here examine, the fine devices of sarcasm and ridicule which make this history so rich in intrinsic sanctions deserve attention. The woman mocks her husband. The lover mocks. These are expressions of rage, or attempts to egg him into overreaching his position. The latter occurs. Again the lover mocks. But the combination of grief and shame works in him as his mockery seems to have worked in the husband. He seizes the occasion for a protest-sacrifice equivalent to suicide, save that it serves his tribe. The champion turns upon the championed. Red Crooked Nose's mourning is a penance. And one may be certain that his later repute suffered. The people told her to keep her jewelry in remembrance of a "wrong-doer," who, over-penalized, had made himself a hero.

* No empty boast for the young man. And it cut two ways. In itself this killing of a horse, over and above taking back the woman, is wholly proper. The overdoing lies in these points: the woman had brought double a heavy indemnity, the adjustment was over, and the strength of the husband was not equal to the deed he was performing. He was over-reaching and the young man's disdainful ignoring of his act showed him up in just that way.

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684 pressure on her, she owned up that the bead belonged to Touch A Person With A Closed Fist. When these words escaped her mouth, the friend, Little Medicine, shot her dead. Yellow Bear turned away with his friend, and they walked off leaving the dead woman to be sought after by her mother. Later they went over to Touch A Person With A Closed Fist and got the three horses from him.

[562] Such techniques of procuring evidence, so effective with women, could not be applied to men. Procedure had to rest on the evidence forthcoming from the woman's confession or upon definite knowledge possessed by the husband. When the defendant denied complicity in sexual transgression there could be no suit. Acceptance of guilt by the accused was a necessary basis to legal action. In only one instance were we able to get an example of denial maintained.

Case 29. Adultery: Defendant Denies Guilt and Is Shamed
Informant: Slope

"Early one evening a young man came to see a married woman. Unfortunately for them, the woman's husband came home early and saw the two near the tent. Startled, the young man ran off before the husband recognized him. But the husband questioned his wife to discover the boy's name. She told him who it was: a young fellow still living with his father. Her husband decided to go over the next morning to demand damages. When day came, the husband left for the boy's home. There he found that the offender was still in bed, so he called to his father saying, 'I want to see you. I've come to collect damages.'

"The father answered, 'Who's it on?'

" 'That boy of yours.'

"By this time the culprit had appeared, and they all sat down to talk the matter over. The husband asked the young man to sit next to him, and calling him 'brother,' declared that he didn't want much. Four horses would satisfy him.

"At this the boy spoke up. 'Who are these four horses on?'

" 'You.'

"The youth acted surprised. 'Why you must be mistaken,' he said. Then his father asked him whether it was true or not that he had wronged this man, and the boy denied it flatly.

"This denial enraged the husband. He pulled his knife and slashed off one of the young man's long braids of hair. Throwing it at his feet he cried, 'I was not going to do this, but if you insist on lying like a coyote, I'll sure make you look funny!'. The boy and his father sat silent while the husband continued, 'That's all I'll do. I won't take any horses—but you sure do look funny.' And with that he stalked out."

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● 558 This was a grievous insult—doubly so. To be minus a braid of hair made one conspicuous. Everyone would ask what had happened. To be compared

to Coyote was to be held up alongside of that sly, ridiculous, untrustworthy mountebank who is the *Til Eulenspiegel* of Comanche mythology. The boy took it hard, too. He sulked in his lodge, ashamed to go out and face his friends. He thought his chance to save his face had come when an alarm of the approach of white military ran through the camp. He prepared to die gloriously, but was doomed to disappointment when the whites held out the olive branch. 627^x
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CONDITIONAL CURSE

The rough-and-ready third degree techniques fit well into the Comanche picture of war-like life. But beyond these forms there were other means at hand for the husband who chose to use them. These were ritualistic approaches to the supernatural which entered when called upon as a legal force. The supernatural was invoked through conditional curse and oath. 627^x
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The use of the conditional curse for proof was very specialized, indeed confined seemingly to adultery and sorcery cases. It was known as "sun-killing" *taβéβekat*. In adultery procedure the husband took his wife to a lonely spot and making smoke with his pipe, he addressed the charge to the sun and the earth and sometimes the moon. By these same powers the wife swore her innocence. These powers in their omnipotence knew the truth, and if the wife were guilty, they afflicted her with consumption. The usual fate of erring women who took the curse was, according to native dogma, that of Short Dress, wife of Kóhi. She denied her husband's charge, placing her hands flat upon the earth and calling upon the powers, while her husband smoked. She bade the sun, "May I die when the geese fly from the south to the north if I have done the thing he has charged me with."⁸ She died the next spring.

In adultery, as in sorcery, the supernatural played the double role of judge and executor. The case was rested by the prosecutor and there was no more for him to do but await results.

More recent developments put another angle on the conditional curse. As Comanche women began to feel the emancipating effects of the impact of white contact, they refused to submit docilely to the curse. It was very unsettling to the men, but even so, That's It laughed as he thought of the startled discomfiture of the first husband to feel its effects. This man had accused his wife of adultery and did not believe her denial, so he prepared a smoke to the sun. And just as he was about to pronounce the fatal words, his wife broke in. 627^x
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"You are going to make smoke. You want to kill me," she expostulated.

⁸ Some Comanches evaded repeating this oath to us for fear of its dangerous implications.

x 627 "When he came home after the smoking was done, he found two people in the
754 bed. One was his wife, and the other a young brave. The brave asked the pardon
684 of the medicine man. What could he do? He was in the uncomfortable circumstances
522 of being unable to separate from his paramour. He wildly offered the husband any-
thing that might be required for his release.

"The husband turned on his heel and went outside. He got a switch. With this in his hand he entered the tipi again and gave the lovers a thorough dusting. After a while he wanted to go to bed. But the pair was still lying there, unable to get loose. So, calling on another of his wives, the medicine man ordered her to help him drag the luckless lovers outside the tipi. He pulling on the man, the wife upon the woman, they dumped the couple on the ground and left them.

"When morning came the parents of the young brave were about to move camp and became concerned with their boy's absence. Scouring through the camp to find him, they came upon their youth—attached still to the woman just as the irate husband had left them. Seeing this, the boy's father went to the medicine man and begged him to set the youth free.

"The husband refused. He said he loved his wife and he wanted her to get enough of it.

"Finding his own entreaties of no avail, the father went to some warriors of great influence and begged them to intercede. They went to the medicine man and offered him anything he might want to withdraw the charm. After this representation the medicine man consented; he went into the tipi and pulled the arrow out from under the bed. With this the pair got loose from each other.

"The father of the youth paid heavy damages to the medicine man, and that settled that part of the case.

• [558] "Then the father of the guilty wife came to plead for his daughter, that she wouldn't get cut up or killed by her husband. He offered his son-in-law gifts and begged him not to hurt his child. He suggested that since she was guilty, it would be well to make her the slave of the other two wives, but he would not like to see her injured. The medicine man refused the gift from his father-in-law, but agreed to keep the woman, though she could no longer be his favorite wife. Thereafter she had to be a slave in his household to her younger sisters."

606 Here is a father begging his son-in-law not to harm his daughter. Propi-
581 tiatory gifts are offered! As was noted in the discussion of murder, the title
562 to a woman passed completely to the husband on marriage. That he refused the gift and yet observed the father's wish seems merely to indicate the nobility of the husband in the case.

ORDEAL

627 Conditional curse is closely akin to ordeal. In view of the wide spread of ordeal in the Old World and its peculiar usefulness in law, its general neglect by the American Indians is unique. Yet neglect need not mean

684 who had been out hunting, returned with meat at the same time they arrived in
762 camp. The next morning at breakfast both Rocky Creek and Thunder asked their sister to add some more fat to their meat. 'I did not endanger my life on the hunt in order that you should enjoy the best of it all,' their brother-in-law muttered. When he said this mean thing, Thunder pushed his meat aside.

"Sister," he requested, "take this food away." She obeyed him. The brothers washed their hands; Thunder motioned to the door, "Come," he said to Rocky Creek, "let us go outside."

"They left the camp to go up into the mountains; there they stayed all day even though it was winter. Towards evening another young man came along. He hailed them. 'What is the meaning of this? Why are you here? I know you have been here since early morning.'

"Thunder answered him, 'We are just thinking things over.'

"What things?" the stranger asked.

"I have no father or mother," Thunder replied. "There is only one thing left for me. Tomorrow I start out to seek death."

"Where then?"

"In the white man's territory. I shall probably not return from there either."

"The stranger said he would join them."

"As they started slowly on their way, they were met by several others in the same plight—young men without a place to go—*tákapana*. They travelled for days and days. Then they were being trailed by some soldiers who were led by an Indian scout. The young men stopped and killed some cattle for meat which they carried into a ravine to cook. Just as they sat ready to eat, one saw a cloud of dust. 'It is a whirlwind, I think,' he remarked to the others.

"No," said another. 'It is the soldiers on our trail.'

"Thunder spoke up then. 'Listen to me, brothers,' he commanded. 'Those of you who care to can still escape. Go now! I stay here. Here by this fire, for I have come seeking this very thing.'

"They waited. The soldiers were upon them. Here and there a man was picked off as the firing began. Rocky Creek approached his brother. 'I am shot,' he said. 'A bullet has wounded me.'

"You can still escape. There is a way out down the creek. Go! But I am staying."

"Brother, come with me," Rocky Creek pleaded.

"Thunder only answered, 'I am not leaving our fire.' The guns rattled on.

"By noon all the *tákapana* save one were dead. The firing ceased. Of all the young men this one alone lived to tell the story of what had happened to this homeless group.

"The brother-in-law who had begrudged food to his wife's brothers was an exception. When he acted so, it wounded their prides so that they went out to seek death. Many young men in the same circumstances courted death at enemy hands."

● [558] So, too, did lovers who had lost face when a braver husband forced them to give up a stolen woman. Cases will be remembered from previous sections.

796 and for the spectators to eat. This continued for three days. All the people
535 had to bathe every morning before entering the lodge.

796 The dancers underwent no torture other than exhaustion and abstain-
535 ence from food and drink. Even the abstinence was not complete. Dancers
785 were allowed to chew slippery elm bark during the rest periods, also to
drink the mucilaginous fluid obtained by scraping the inside of strips of
this bark. They were allowed to eat the dried wild plums which would be
found lying on the ground under plum bushes at this season of the year
and possibly other dried fruits as well.

796 The condition of the dancers was closely watched and if it seemed that
535 any dancer would be unable to last out the full period his father would
783 arrange for his release. The father went to the medicine man and without
making him the formal smoke offering required when his aid was asked in
other matters, gave him a gift and asked that the young man be excused.
If the medicine man accepted the gift, the young man was told to go behind
the screen, take up his bed and leave. His father went with him from the
lodge to the creek, where the young man washed his mouth out, dived in four
times against the current and then washed his mouth again. After this he
was free to go home. Diving four times against the current was also a part
of the ritual used in relinquishing any supernatural power which had be-
come burdensome. Sometimes another man would take the place of the
one who had been released and finish the dance for him, but informants did
not know how this was arranged. Actually, such releases were very infre-
[558] quent, as they were considered disgraceful.

796 The dance ended at midnight on the fourth day. Informants were not
535 sure whether the dancers underwent any ceremony of secularization at
the end of the ceremony. The next morning camp was broken and the
various bands moved back to their own ranges. Four over night halts had
to be made on the return trip. Even the band in whose territory the dance
had been held would move away, leaving the lodge with its offerings de-
serted. Shortly after the dance a series of small feasts would be given, one
in honor of each dancer. To these feasts only the dancer, his relatives, the
medicine man, and the old men of the Sun Dance orchestra would be in-
vited.

[346] Very little regarding the symbolism or purpose of the dance is remem-
bered at the present time. The whole lodge is said to have represented an
eagle's nest while the buffalo manikin or pelt placed on top of the center
pole is said to have been food for the eagle. In their movements and whis-
tling the dancers were supposed to be imitating young eagles not yet able
to fly.

GLADWIN]

COMANCHE KIN BEHAVIOR

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though this was not invariable. There was apparently no ceremony connected with adoption. 597

An illegitimate child was a great shame to all members of the family, and especially to the girl's brother, whose prestige was to some extent a reflection of that of his family. It was usually brought up by the girl's mother, whom it would call mother. Some pressure was put on the boy by the girl's parents to marry her, but he could not be forced to do so. The girl's family referred to him teknonymously, but his family apparently did not recognize the relationship at all. Her marriage possibilities were somewhat reduced by this unfortunate happening, and she might well become only a secondary wife of some older man. [558] [551]

Twins were not wanted, and were generally considered a danger to the mother, as well as to all her blood kin to a lesser degree. This was especially true as they grew up, suggesting the effects of the gradual emergence of the child's personality discussed above. Some women, with the assistance of powerful names for the children, disregarded this belief and raised them together, but others disposed of the younger twin. If some woman did not come and offer to take one, it might be laid outside the tipi somewhere, where someone invariably came to get it. The mother attempted to forget it. If one twin died, all the clothing and other things which had been prepared for it were buried with it, and the mother or her sister made a round of the camp collecting what was offered in the way of other clothes. 845 [184] [847]

Among the parents' siblings, there is a definite emphasis on the mother's side. The mother's sisters were apt also to be married to one's father and, even if not, were usually around the family helping if possible. The mother's brother is also considered to be a source of guidance, assistance, and favors of fairly major proportions; it is significant that he, also, is permitted to give away a girl in marriage. As usual, behavior toward more distant parents, aunts and uncles depends on personality and propinquity; whether or not they have any children of their own is also often of importance. TY's father remained with her mother's family to marry two more sisters, so that she was brought up in the midst of a great number of maternal relatives. The members of this extended family were rather strikingly unprolific, so that she had very few even distant siblings; as a result she received a great deal of attention and an almost continuous stream of extremely valuable gifts from all her parents, aunts and uncles, even though related in very roundabout ways. Her younger brother, incidentally, became a favorite child according to the best institutionalized patterns. 604 593

Husband-Wife. Wives were very clearly dominated by their warrior-husbands, and acceded to their wishes in all matters, including the treatment of children. Men could, and often would, beat their wives on any pretext they chose, while a wife's infidelity frequently led to extremely harsh treatment, 593 684

always ride without saddles, and without any other encum-
brance than the waist-cloth to their persons.—This lightness
of apparel gives them a manifest advantage over their Span-
ish adversaries, whose horses are heavily caparisoned, and
whose persons are embarrassed by a cumbrous load of ac-
couterments that partake more of the pomp, than the uses
of war. Light shot guns, javelins, or lances, about 8 feet
long, and bows and arrows compose their weapons. For
defence they wear on the left wrist, a shield made of Buf-
faloes hide, consolidated when green by a process in which
fire is the principal agent. They are made in an oval or
circular form, about two feet in diameter, and presenting a
surface slightly convexed. They are exceedingly tough,
quite impenetrable to an arrow, and often so to the ball of
a scopete; and they are light and easily disengaged from the
arm in case of emergency. The loss of a shield does not
attach an inexpressible disgrace to the character of a Co-
manchee warrior. They are comparatively novices in the
use of fire-arms, and have an insuperable aversion to the
weight of Rifles, but employ the bow and lance with great
dexterity, and to a dispersed and retreating enemy, with
destructive effect. The known capacity of their horses, and
their minute acquaintance with the invaded country, which
enables them generally to surprise the indolent and inert
Spaniards, concurring with the miserable condition of the
provinces for defense, inspire them with an artificial fear-
lessness, which invests them in the view of their ignorant
and spiritless enemies, with the hideous horrors of the
basilisk. But in truth, these horrors are imaginary: oppose
them with decision and energy, and they will crouch like
the Spaniel, or fly like the "stricken fawn."—They usually
make what they term their grand campaign, once a year,
either in the spring or fall season, when the three bands
unite and co-operate in plundering and devastating the de-
fenceless provinces that are contiguous to the Rio Grande.
Besides these periodical invasions, the preparations for
which, bear some resemblance to the pomp and circum-
stance of war, and the issues are frequently most disastrous
to the exposed Provincials; there is a continual egress and

[Ca. 1818]

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100 • THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF ILLNESS

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rationale for witchcraft, especially between males, in the nomadic Comanche culture. In a society which emphasized physical prowess, the old and enfeebled were at a definite disadvantage. The older men could not join the younger in the prestigious activities of war, sexual adventuring, and hunting, and they were therefore forced to turn to magic and supernatural means if they desired to continue their futile attempts to compete for social power and prestige with the younger men of the tribe. Since Comanche culture was not oriented to allow an individual to acquire prestige and position through material acquisition alone, this avenue was also denied the older men.

Factors in the Decline of Witchcraft

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Perhaps a factor contributing to the lessening incidences of witchcraft, noted by Sanapia even in her own time, can be attributed to the fact that in the post-reservation period the older men of the tribe were able to acquire a certain economic power through such channels as land allotments and welfare, while at the same time the younger men were being denied their main traditional avenue to prestige—war. Thus a more tolerable balance developed between the prestige and social power levels of the young and the old. The woman, whose social position rose and fell with the male to whom she was attached, also acquired the benefits of this postreservation phenomenon. A woman could own land like a male, and with older women this became an attraction to the younger men, men perhaps born too late to take full advantage of the land allotments. Therefore, an older and economically more powerful woman could more successfully compete with a younger woman for available males.

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However, neither economic power nor supernatural methods can cause a woman to produce offspring after she has reached a certain advanced age. In a moment of anger or spite, a young Comanche woman's invectives directed toward an old woman will inevitably include a caustic reminder to the older woman of her "uselessness" as a woman. Sanapia and many of my female Comanche informants mentioned the potential dangers which a young woman exposes herself and her children to when she flaunts her offspring in front of an older woman whose children have left her. This, in Sanapia's opinion, is the reason for the high degree of witchd infants and why Sanapia immediately accuses an old woman for the act of witchcraft.

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Several other factors can be suggested as relevant to the decline of Comanche witchcraft. With the allotment of lands the various family units within the same band became more isolated and thus any possibility of an act which could motivate an individual to operate witchcraft against another member of that band became lessened as relatively forced social proximity, as was the case in the reservation period, became lessened among band members.

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As the band's economic function was destroyed, the individual family units were compelled to become more independent. Thus, the older members of the Comanche extended families were necessarily allotted tasks as more jobs had to be handled by a smaller number of individuals. In this manner the older people